

# Clarke County

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Planning Commission  
**Special Meeting Minutes**  
October 17, 2013



A special meeting of the Planning Commission of Clarke County, Virginia, was held at the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Thursday, October 17, 2013.

## **ATTENDANCE**

George L. Ohrstrom, II, Chair; Anne Caldwell, Vice Chair; Robina Bouffault, Clay Brumback, Scott Kreider, Doug Kruhm, Cliff Nelson, John Staelin, Chip Steinmetz and Jon Turkel.

## **ABSENT**

Tom McFillen

## **STAFF**

Brandon Stidham, Planning Director.

## **OTHERS PRESENT**

Val VanMeter (Winchester Star), Mayor Franklin Roberts (Boyce), Laurel Greene (Boyce Town Council), Walter McMann, Christy Dunkle (Town of Berryville Planner), Gem Bingol (Piedmont Environmental Council), and others.

## **CALLED TO ORDER**

Chair Ohrstrom called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Commission voted to approve the agenda.

**Yes:** Bouffault, Brumback, Caldwell, Kreider, Kruhm, Nelson (moved), Ohrstrom, Staelin, Steinmetz and Turkel (seconded)

**No:** No one

**Absent:** McFillen

## **PUBLIC HEARING – 2013 Comprehensive Plan**

The County's Comprehensive Plan provides a vision for how a community should grow in the future. It is typically long-range and forward-looking, addressing a wide range of issues and questions relating to land use, community facilities, infrastructure, preservation, community character, and economic development among other topics.

The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2007. The proposed 2013 Comprehensive Plan contains amendments which include elements to clarify and strengthen the County's vision including a new Summary Statement of Purpose, new Objectives on outdoor resources and conservation easements, recommendations to create new component plans, updated demographic information, and streamlining and readability edits throughout the document.

Mr. Stidham explained the format of this evening's agenda saying that the 2013 Comprehensive Plan and the 2013 Transportation Plan would be in two separate public hearings and two separate votes by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Stidham gave a brief overview of what the Comprehensive Plan is. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan is a long range plan that captures the community's vision for the future. It establishes policies to aid in making land use decisions. It projects resources that are needed in order for the community to carry out that vision. It develops schools in the form of strategies to help make divisions successful. The Code of Virginia requires every locality to adopt a Comprehensive Plan. Clarke County adopted their first Plan in 1974 and the Towns of Berryville and Boyce maintain their own Comprehensive Plans. The Code of Virginia requires the Planning Commission to prepare and the Board of Supervisors to adopt a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plans must be reviewed every five years to determine if an updated Plan is needed. The current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007 and the Planning Commission began work on the draft 2013 Comprehensive Plan in the fall of 2012. This included a line by line evaluation of the current Plan by the Commission as a whole over several special workshop meetings as well as the release of an initial draft being in the spring of 2013. Public comment sessions were conducted in three locations around the County to solicit public input of the initial draft of the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a valuable tool as the County faces different challenges over time.

Mr. Stidham stated that the next steps in the process after this evening's meeting is for the Planning Commission to conduct a public hearing and consider the comments received and ultimately take action to recommend adoption of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan to the Board of Supervisors. He stated that following review of the Plan the Board of Supervisors will set public hearing to consider adoption of the Plan. Mr. Stidham concluded his presentation with a statement from the Comprehensive Plan "The Comprehensive Plan is first and foremost a document for the citizens of Clarke County, it is designed to protect and enhance the quality of life and sense of community valued by the people who have chosen to live there."

Chair Ohrstrom asked for a round of applause for the work that Mr. Stidham has done on the Comprehensive Plan and guiding the Commission through this process. Chair Ohrstrom stated that before the Public Hearing is opened he wanted to say that he will allow each person a four minute time limit to speak and that speakers should be polite and considerate of everyone that is present. There being no further discussion, Chair Ohrstrom asked for public comments.

Walter McMann, resident of Longmarsh District, asked if Mr. Stidham could elaborate on an item that he read in the plan about transferring various building rights to certain zones. Mr. Stidham stated that it was originally in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan and it was retained in a similar fashion to consider that among other development tools that are out there to see if it would suit our land use philosophy. There is not a directive to specifically go out there and implement that program in particular it is to consider that among other tools that we may might benefit from exploring. Chair Ohrstrom added that the Commonwealth of Virginia wrote some enabling state legislation for localities to develop their own ordinances about transfer of development rights. He stated that we have not crafted an ordinance about the transfer of development rights philosophy. He said to the best of his knowledge Frederick County is the only County in the state that has actually done one. He stated that as of now we do not have an ordinance that would allow a person to transfer development rights in Clarke County. Mr. McMann asked if the County would ever allow the transfer of development rights and Chair Ohrstrom said probably but it depends upon what the wishes of the County and the citizens are.

There being no further public comments, Chair Ohrstrom closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

The Commission voted unanimously to recommend adoption of the 2013 Clarke County Comprehensive Plan as presented by staff.

**Yes:** Bouffault (moved), Brumback, Caldwell (seconded), Kreider, Kruhm, Nelson, Ohrstrom, Staelin, Steinmetz and Turkel.

**No:** No one

**Absent:** McFillen

### **PUBLIC HEARING - 2013 Transportation Plan**

The County's Transportation Plan is one of nine component plans that contain detailed strategies to implement the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Plan is designed to comply with the requirements of Code of Virginia §15.2-2223.

Mr. Stidham stated that the second item is the review of the proposed 2013 Transportation Plan update. He said he will begin this discussion with what the purpose of the Transportation Plan is. He said that the Transportation Plan is being updated in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and it is one of the implementing components of the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that the current Transportation Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2007 and is incorporated into the body of the current Comprehensive Plan. The proposed 2013 Transportation Plan is recommended for adoption as a standalone plan and will be a part of the Comprehensive Plan by reference. He said that there were state law changes implemented in 2012 requiring all Comprehensive Plans to include a Transportation Plan with the following elements:

- An inventory of the County's transportation system.
- Assumptions to support the County's policies and proposed improvement projects.
- A needs assessment that compares the existing transportation system with the County's land use policies to determine how future growth will affect the system.
- Proposed improvement projects with planning-level cost estimates that address the County's transportation needs.

He said state law also requires all updated Comprehensive Plans to contain a fully compliant Transportation Plan at the time of adoption. He said that the 2013 Transportation Plan updates our current plan to include all these new required state elements. He said we are also required to have the Transportation Plan adopted at the same time we have the new Comprehensive Plan adopted so they will be done parallel to each other. He said that the drafts of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan and the 2013 Transportation Plan have been evaluated and approved by VDOT as being in accord with state law requirements. They are ultimately adopted in this form or similar form and will be in full compliance with state law. Regarding the County's land use and transportation philosophies, the county's land use philosophy is to plan for growth to occur in the incorporated towns and designated business intersections. This enables growth to be managed and effectively served by public facilities such as roads, water, sewer, schools, etc. The County focuses its limited transportation improvement funds on projects that improve effectiveness of road networks and towns as well as the designated business intersections. The County also pursues projects outside of the growth areas that improve public safety and functionality. The County is generally opposed to projects that increase capacity of roads outside of Towns and the

designated business intersections. Mr. Stidham also provided an overview of the County's priority transportation projects.

After discussion with the Commission and Staff, Chair Ohrstrom called for public comments.

Franklin Roberts, Town of Boyce Mayor, asked if we are planning to implement some of these road projects within the next five years and if it would be funded from state money or federal money. Chair Ohrstrom said if the projects get funded it would come from local money, state money and federal money. Mr. Roberts said it is no use to have a plan if we are not going to do anything. Mr. Staelin said he goes to a lot of state meetings and in a few weeks he will be attending a meeting in Staunton and will present our priorities list to the Commonwealth of Transportation Board. He said that then they decide from the primary roads which ones they want to fund. Mr. Staelin stated that every once and awhile one of our projects gets picked but it depends on how much money is in the state's coffers. He said that he presents these as important projects that we would like to get done. He said that some roads we do get a budget for and we have more control over those roads in what we can get done. He stated that on other roads we do not get a budget and it is out of our hands.

There being no further public comments, Chair Ohrstrom closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

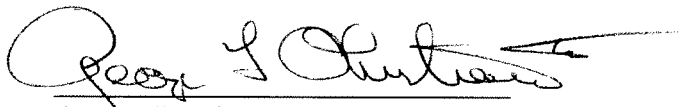
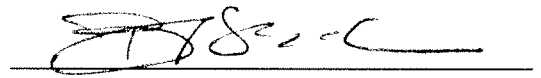
The Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval for adoption of the 2013 Clarke County Transportation Plan as presented by Staff.

**Yes:** Bouffault (seconded), Brumback (moved), Caldwell, Kreider, Kruhm, Nelson, Ohrstrom, Staelin, Steinmetz and Turkel

**No:** No one

**Absent:** McFillen

There being nothing further to come before the Commission the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

  
George L. Ohrstrom, II, Chair  
Brandon Stidham, Director of Planning

Minutes prepared by Debbie Bean, Recording Secretary